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AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for holding an annuloplasty ring, comprising:

a holder body configured to hold the annuloplasty ring, the holder body having a first opening for receiving a tip of a handle and a first outer finger gripping surface facing in a first direction; and

a handle coupling having a second outer finger gripping surface facing in a direction opposed to the first direction and having a second opening that is transversely misaligned with the first opening until the gripping surfaces are squeezed together, sliding the handle coupling slidably mounted relative to the holder body, to release the tip to couple the holder body to a tip of a handle, the second opening in the handle coupling being slidably relative to the holder body between a lock position where the handle tip engages the second opening and an unlock position where the handle tip is released from the second opening, the handle coupling including a release mechanism having a second outer gripping surface opposed to the first outer gripping surface to move the handle coupling between the lock and unlock positions, thereby releasing the handle tip from the handle coupling.

2. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 4~~23~~ including a spring configured to bias the handle coupling into a lock position.

3. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 2~~23~~ wherein the release mechanism is configured to transmit a force on the handle coupling against the spring toward an unlock position.

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 4~~1~~ wherein the tip is locked within the second opening until the finger gripping surfaces are squeezed together.

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6. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the handle coupling is configured to couple to a protuberance at ~~a~~ the tip of the handle.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 71 wherein the opening is non-circular.

9. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 71 wherein the opening is tapered.

10. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first and second gripping surfaces are raised.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the handle coupling is configured to slide within the holder body in a direction generally parallel with a plane of the holder body.

12. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 including a handle.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein a tip of the handle includes a protuberance configured to engage the handle coupling.

14. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the release mechanism comprises a button.

15. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the handle coupling comprises a clip.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein the clip is slidable within the holder body and provides a locking and release mechanism.

17. (previously presented): The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a handle for coupling to the apparatus for holding an annuloplasty ring comprising:

an elongate shaft, a gripping portion coupled to one end of the elongate shaft, the gripping portion including ribs; and

a tip coupled to the other end of the shaft, the tip including a protuberance configured to be locked in the apparatus and an abutting surface configured to abut the apparatus.

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18. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 17 further comprising flat portions.

19. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the tip includes walls and the flat portions of the handle are aligned with the walls of the tip.

20. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the tip includes walls.

21. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the walls are tapered.

--22. (New) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the second opening in the handle coupling is slidable relative to the holder body between a lock position where the handle tip engages the second opening and an unlock position where the handle tip is released from the second opening.

23. (New) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the handle coupling further comprises a release mechanism to move the handle coupling between the lock and unlock positions, thereby releasing the handle tip from the handle coupling. --